

# **McCuskey, Roy. First-Hand Account of the Seminary Building Fire (excerpt from All Things Work Together for Good to Them That Love God, 1964).**

## **Roy McCuskey's First-Hand Account of the Seminary Building Fire**

The fire occurred February 4, 1905. The building was heated by air with coal as fuel. Probably a faulty flue was the cause. I was standing in the first floor hall not far from the library room when some one noticed smoke coming from a ventilator and shouted "fire". An alarm was sent in to the city volunteer fire department, but it was discovered that the hose was frozen. The fire spread rapidly through the ventilators which acted as flues and in no time the fire had reached the third story. An attempt was made to salvage the equipment, chairs, and other movable things were carried out or dropped from the windows. Books from the library were handed out the windows, students and faculty joined in the work.

The thoughtful and quick action of Professor Trotter saved the records and students' enrollment cards. They were the first things to be taken from the building. Of course, there was considerable confusion during the fire, or until all that could be saved was taken out and all the students were safe. Some were still on the second floor when a slight explosion occurred; there was a grand scramble to get out. John Gilmore, (the late Dr. John Gilmore of Wheeling) thought the stairs had collapsed and presented himself at one of the windows yelling for help. Some of the boys seized an overcoat and used it for a net into which he jumped to safety.

The building was a total loss. President Wier was out of town and Vice President Trotter assumed full charge. Rooms were provided in an empty residence on College Avenue; the parlors of the Agnes Howard Hall were pressed into service, as well as rooms in the Music Hall, and classes were resumed the next day.

Graduation exercises for the Seminary Class of 1905, of which I was one, and for the first College Class, consisting of five members, were held in the Opera House.

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McCuskey, R. (1964) *All things work together for good to them that love God*. Buckhannon, WV: West Virginia Wesleyan College, p. 88.